

**Annual Report
Strengthening Democratic Governance in Pakistan
April 2007-March 2008**

By
South Asia Partnership Pakistan
In collaboration with
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)
&
Swiss Agency for development and Cooperation (SDC)

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results and achievements of the Strengthening Democratic Governance in Pakistan (SDGP) are very encouraging for SAP-Pk and its partners. SAP-PK has been able to successfully situate its efforts with 165 new socially and politically vibrant PWGs and meet most of the quantitative and qualitative targets that it set with the consultation of its provincial offices at the national level and which the provincial offices set in turn with the consultation of district partners. In this process of joint planning and implementation, of course, there has been invaluable input, in terms of guidance, time and energy, from District Focal Groups, Provincial Advisory Groups and CIDA partners as and when required.

As far as the progress of SDGP this year is concerned, SAP-PK has tried to consolidate its position in 263 union councils. In the first thrust- which is about education of PWGs and enhancement of their ability to negotiate for their rights with local governments and government line agencies - SAP-PK formed, trained and facilitated 165 PWGs. These PWGs received trainings on organizational and financial management, human rights women's rights, children's rights, role of local government, implementation and participatory monitoring, formation of CCBs, project writing, etc. Estimated 10,000 male and female peasants and workers benefited from these trainings. These groups prepared development programs. About 100 of them have already received financial assistance from SAP-PK, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and local governments. These development schemes in turn have started benefiting more than 12,000 people directly in different areas of 263 target union councils. Women's PWGs are special mention. They have developed very useful models of economic activity which SAP-PK is thinking to replicate at least at the level of 16 focal union councils. They have formed cooperatives and thus effectively dealing social and economic forces by stepping out of their traditional bonds. There are several stories on how these women have enhanced their confidence and reduced dependence on males.

The peasants and workers groups have become more organized in their work this year. They have formed 40 district and 4 provincial level networks. There are also various other small networks and civil society organizations, including Aurat Foundation, Strengthening Participatory Organization, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, involved in this struggle to consolidate efforts. These networks are conducting district and provincial campaigns through press conferences, rallies, seminars and public level dialogues on issues of their interest. Issues which have been in focus this year included land rights, farmers' policy, access to information, resource allocation to CCBs and livelihood rights. Several other issues, like education and health, were also taken up on the fringes of their mainstream demands. The campaigns are now shaping up into policy level consultations, in which politicians if all political parties have started participating.

SAP-PK has also witnessed improved level of support and cooperation from elected representatives and government line agencies. The representatives of GLAs in 20 districts met around 80 times with common people this year and started sharing their progress. Some GLAs are becoming more responsive. The others need a little more exposure and encouragement to become part of the process of sharing. SAP-PK is entering third phase of this interaction in which joint planning will take place.

SAP-Pk also conducted different liaison meetings, orientation trainings and public level dialogues with district level representatives on transparency, accountability, peoples' participation in decision making processes, joint planning, inclusion of members of PWGs in Insaf Committees and gender responsive budgeting. More than 340 political schools, public and public meetings were organized this year in which estimated 20,000 participants learnt about local issues and progress of the department and local bodies. In all 263 union councils, District Focal Groups took the lead on holding

political schools. In each school, or a political discussion as a matter of fact, there were eight to ten elected representatives who attended it. These members discussed issues and themes like “democratic governance at the local level”, “women’s role in politics” and “access to information”. Some of them drew very good conclusions on facilitating people living within their existing formal and informal capacities. Participation of common people as observers in the sessions of 20 UCs is one of the best examples that local political leadership and people have started thinking beyond traditional boundaries. SAP-PK has also undertaken assessment of the capacities of union secretaries and other stakeholders in furthering strengthening the pro-people perceptions and practices at the field level in the next phase.

The representatives of PWGs have developed a good rapport with local political leadership over this year as a consequence of their 200 meetings and mass mobilization drives. Thousands of women got registered as voters and many of them are ready to contest local bodies’ elections due in 2009. Political parties in nearly 50 constituencies have already expressed their desire to provide support to PWGs member women contestants. This very political consciousness enabled SAP-Pk to identify easily 1100 male and 1100 female election observers to observe the general elections. This socially and politically vibrant group received training from SAP-PK on election observation and then fulfilled their responsibility. The group of the same, and other peasants and workers, also organized 20 Awami Tribunals and 16 awami parliaments in which estimated 8000 citizens, elected representatives and representatives of the local GLAs interacted, shared their views and developed recommendations. Similarly, 14 talk shows were also organized at district press clubs in which issues of the peasants, especially women and religious minorities, were taken up in media.

Thematic papers, policy dossiers, annual performance reports of PWGs and local governments, video and print case-studies have been on time, relevant and supportive in our work this year also. SAP-PK produced around 30 such items for the use of PWGs, DRCs, provincial offices, local governments and GLAs. We printed monthly newsletter “Chanan” and covered stories, features, articles and letters of the stakeholders. These communication products addressed issues related to governance, peoples’ participation in governance, role of government line agencies, agricultural and policy issues, performance of citizens including CCBs and PWGs, resource allocation to development projects of the local governments and the CCBs, etc. These products were followed by 8 provincial seminars on the same issues in which estimated 4,000 people participated.

The work put together has been possible with the efforts of our staff members and partners. Our staff and partners have also benefited from various opportunities such as capacity-assessments and trainings towards improved planning, implementation and documentation and understanding gender as cross cutting theme of SDGP and SAP-PK. They continued to build on their strengths, situate themselves in local realities, identify gaps for better response, discover new venues for taking initiatives and help SAP-PK find new partners for better and reinforced coverage of the disadvantaged.

The follow pages of this report indicate some successes that SAP-PK made during April 2007 to March 2008.

2 ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCB	Citizen Community Board
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DO	District Officer
DCO	District Coordination Officer
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
DFID	Department for International Development Govt. of UK
DFG	District Focal Group
DFO	District Financial Officer
DPO	District Planning Officer
DCO	District Coordination Officer
DRG	District Resource Group
DTCE	Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment
EDO	Executive District Officer
ER	Elected Representatives
GAD	Gender and Development
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
GOP	Government of Pakistan
GLA	Government Line Agencies
KWBs	Kissan and Workers Baethaks (Farmers and Workers Centres)
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
LGO	Local Government Ordinance
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NRB	National Reconstruction Bureau
PWGs	Peasants and Workers Groups
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SDGP	Supporting Democratic Development in Pakistan
SPO	Strengthening Participatory Organizations
SSD	Social Service Delivery

3 PROGRESS REPORT / LOOKING AT THE PAST:

3-1 Changes in the Context: Key Factors that Might Have Influenced the Project's Results

There are three different shades of change that have taken place over the past year. One is productive, the second is challenging and the third is a potential opportunity.

The first shade, which is of strength to SAP-PK and SDGP, relates to the unceremonious removal of 60 judges of the Supreme and High Courts after General Musharraf imposed 'emergency-plus' martial law and the eventual struggle of the masses. The widespread unrest in the country brought people to a point of unity. It helped SAP-PK nurture among people belief in 'democracy', 'rule of law', social justice', 'strengthening of institutions'. It enabled the organization to organize masses in small geographic constituencies of its focus socially and politically so that they participate in the political process effectively. On the basis of improved relationship, it speedup our work in communities, expanded us where needed and focused us on networking of the PWGs and consultations with GLAs and local representatives on improvement of their services. As the consequence of this all, citizens of our target union councils showed their faith in electoral process on February 18, 2008. They demonstrated their faith in the political process, in the face of insecurity, uncertainty and propaganda of the establishment against democratic forces. This was second time in history that people defeated retrogressive forces with the power of their votes. Now when SAP-PK talks about "democracy", "rights" and "security" in peasants' communities, they are able to relate these points with power of vote, defeat of Musharraf and his allies, reduction in suicide bombings, reduction in number of people being abducted by agencies and political parties stand on different national and regional issues. It however does not mean that extremism and the politics of elimination are all gone from Pakistan with the change on February 18, but it means that people wish political process should handle issues first and power be used as only when all other options are already exhausted. The point in this is that the air of self confidence which people have after February 18, 2008, has improved our work environment and relationship of trust among people, political parties, elected representatives at the local level, and even government line agencies. There is a hope among people of reversal of detrimental trends.

The second shade which now attracts attention of SDGP at the end of this year is that the new government might roll back the local government system considering it the "remnants" of Musharraf regime. Some politicians indicated that directly or stated to bring changes which might reduce the role of women and the character of local governments. So, the change which people really struggled for might deprive them of their political rights. If it happens at all, it will be a big blow. It will be a blow to local leadership who have no chance to represent their small communities at provincial or national level, it will be a blow to thousands of women who joined politics to the benefit of 48 % population of this country, it would be a blow to small development initiatives that people are taking in the form of CCBs and it will be a blow to a process of democratization of society at the grass roots. So, as we have new politically elected government, there are also chances of political digression. The challenge is there. SAP-PK has this situation in focus and wants to intensify its efforts in advocacy, capacity development and networking so that better results are achieved and shown to the government and people are organized to take stand against any possible political marginalization. So far, joint planning of different stakeholders, networking of the peasants and workers groups at the national level, training of the union councils on responsive budgeting and transparency, networking of elected representatives, national policy dialogues, upgradation of the functioning of district resource centres from information delivery to political hubs for guidance and activism are some of the initiatives that appear as important for SAP-PK in view of past results and future challenges.

The third shade is about opportunities coming our way. SAP-PK has its presence in and links with PWGs, DRC, DFGs, local governments, government line agencies and political parties. There is lot of potentials. For example, the kind of results that PWGs have produced, SAP-PK is planning to deepen its work on the same. This means that we will not expand to more union councils, but will create more Kissan Baethaks and PWGs within the same UCs in order to consolidate efforts and solidify impact of our work through networking and financial assistance for modular schemes. This also DRCs also bear a lot of potentials for us. The Balochistan experience educates us to expand the role of DRCs, and make it a thriving point of interaction among various stakeholders than merely a point of information delivery.

4 PROGRESS REVIEW: RESULTS, ACHIEVEMENTS & QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT BASED ON CHART REVIEW (SEE ANNEXURE-I)

Result 1:

Peasants and rural workers, especially women and minorities, are organized and enabled to negotiate their rights and utilize their potential

- SAP-PK formed 165 PWGs during April 2007 - March 2008. Out of these, 40 are being led by women and the remaining 125 by men.
- SAP-PK provided trainings to 9873 members of PWGs (7133 males and 2740 females) in all the 40 districts, on various issues and skills, such as, democratic governance and role of citizens, human rights, women's rights, children's rights, gender, organizational management, record keeping, livelihood management, water management, role of local governments, formation of CCBs, proposal writing of CCBs, project monitoring and marketing of crops.
- As the result of trainings that SAP-PK held during this year, 25 groups sought financial assistance for development schemes from SAP-PK and 37 groups submitted their schemes to the local governments as CCBs. About 20 found support from Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund. A total of 8066 males and 4546 females benefited directly and indirectly from the development schemes. Needless to mention that the process of development of schemes requires from all PWGs to involve women at every stage, such as planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Peasants and Workers' Networks have been provided training on "role of local government and potential initiatives of farmers' networks. Twelve exposures of the PWGs to successful projects as well as services, 263 mass mobilization meetings and 8 district level conventions for mobilization to participate in the local decision making, 16 mass and media campaigns for land rights, tenancy act, livelihood rights, water rights, allocation of funds, etc. have also been very helpful in cementing the strength of the networks and taking issues of the farmers at policy forums. Debates on Tenancy Act (in Sindh Assembly) and Land Rights (in the government circles to the effect of admitting right of the local **people on land** -----) are two main examples of the success of the campaigns of the networks.
- During the reported period, 120 UC level meetings were organized for facilitation in the development of schemes at the local level. The PWGs submitted their development priorities both formally and informally to the local representatives. All district partners also organized 4 meetings at the district level in which PWGs presented their schemes before partner and other NGOs for seeking their support in identification of funds.
- All the 40 District Resource Centers that SAP- PK formed under SDGP disseminate information to elected representatives, civil society organizations, peasants and workers groups and NGOs, on women vis-à-vis development, health, economy, politics, etc., in the context of Pakistan. They are gradually becoming hub of information collection and delivery. In Balochistan, DRCs have acquired added role of providing space for stakeholders get together and discuss issues of their interest and seek guidance by thrashing ideas. SAP-Pk is trying to replicate this model in other areas as well.
- SAP-PK is planning to form exclusively women's networks of the peasants and workers as provincial and national policy forums open up next year. The organization has planned to engage

leading political parties in the process to see that pro-farmers reforms in the sector of agriculture are undertaken. Plan has been chartered to launch national campaign on “National Policy for Farmers”, essentially based on the recognition that women and religious minorities have exclusive presence in the “farmers community”.

Result 2:

Functioning of elected representatives and local government institutions improved and are more responsive to PWGs’ interests.

- 3 TOTs were held to enable 65 male and 10 female elected UC representatives from Balochistan, Sindh and NWFP to explain role and challenges of local governments to their colleagues and to orientate them with the philosophy and methodology of participatory planning. As the consequence of this activity, elected representatives invited PWGs in 16 UCs to attend sessions as observers. The same PWGs also organized meetings with public representatives and educated them about their priorities when elected representatives showed interest in listening to their recommendations.
- The organization conducted 32 orientation sessions in 16 UCs on LG roles and responsibilities with gender in focus. In these orientations, SAP-PK emphasized inclusion of women representatives in monitoring committees. In 4 UCs, PWGs members are included in Insaf Committees whereas in 6, recommendations of the PWGs were taken into account.
- SAP-PK organized 40 district level seminars during the reported year. Issues of health and hygiene, reproductive rights, water and sanitation, women’s participation in elections as voters, women’s identity cards, etc. with respect to local problems and realities were taken up in these forums. The realization among people, especially women, about their rights as human beings and citizens is gradually growing. This is evident from their participation, discussion and follow-up activities. This is also evident from their participation in broader national campaigns such as the one started after Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry was illegally removed by General Musharraf.
- Trainings were organized on effective role of monitoring committees, monitoring as concept and practice, pro-poor budgeting and assessment of development schemes. Sixteen trainings were held during the reported year with 105 elected representatives from focal UCs. The elected representatives showed interest in acquiring extensive training on pro-poor budgeting. Nearly half of them have shown interest in detailed training on gender responsive budgeting. In 10 UCs, the elected representatives are now willing to share record with people on one call. This is a little progress that elected representatives have started accepting rights of the people to have access to information. The UC are also interested in computerizing their system for effective maintenance of record and facilitating people to have easy access to information.
- Seven 3-Day relatively detailed trainings were held on development of pro-poor schemes which enabled 130 male and 43 female CCBs and local government representatives to develop and scrutinize schemes through gender-lense. In 8 UCs, the process of scrutiny has been started. SAP-PK is trying to further facilitate them informally through voluntary support of DFGs.
- Primary level trainings have been organized with elected representatives of the district government and government line agencies in which the participants shared their system of accountability and transparency. The consensus developed in the training to take common citizens on board in the exercise of transparency and accountability informally. The participants

suggested to hold national conference in which local government and government line agencies should present recommendations which in turn should be taken up to the provincial and national governments so that they be considered in new legislation.

- Exercise of political schools was carried out at least once in the reported year with average 8-10 elected representatives in all 263 union councils. DFGs led the sessions as facilitators. The issues discussed in the schools included “democratic governance at the local level”, “women’s role in politics” and “access to information”. The participants also found “networking of local body ERs” as important subject and showed keen interest in making such network. SAP-PK, through DFGs, has already started providing information to at least Punjab based ERs to be part of the Local Councils Association of Punjab and get in touch with LCAP and CIDA Devolution Support Project for this purpose.
- In 16 UCs, SAP-PK conducted assessment of the capacity of the union secretaries and found scientific methods of record keeping and provision of information to people as the most important areas in which they wanted facilitation/training and assistance. The findings suggest that SAP-PK should undertake some additional activities to fulfill the needs of the union secretaries.
- SAP-PK organized 119 dialogues and meetings at different levels in which masses as well as elected representatives participated. These activities were organized for general awareness of the stakeholders on local issues, to solicit commitments from elected representatives for inclusion of people in local decision making, transparency and access to information. SAP-PK assisted PWGs and local representatives in 16 UCs in conducting discussion on local development planning. In 4 UCs, the elected representatives developed schemes in view of the recommendations of the PWGs. The UCs were though very disappointed due to the fact that they don’t have any significant amount of resources on their disposal. This inability in turn affects their credibility in the local communities. On average, there were 100 participants, both male and female, in each dialogue.

Result 3:

Systems and mechanisms for effective and efficient social service delivery of selected GLAs demonstrated.

- Besides providing information to the interested stakeholders on areas of their interest, 20 of the 40 District Resource Centers facilitated PWGs in developing pro-poor schemes and linking them with resources providers such as Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) during the reported period.
- During the reported period, twenty meetings of the SDGP partners, local NGOs and Social Service Committees were held to map possibility of avoiding duplication of work and strengthening local networking. This segment enabled SAP-PK to locally publicize SDGP, create room for local partners to become part of the mainstream development and advocacy initiatives and strengthen local groups.
- SAP-PK organized 4 workshops on participatory planning with 56 male and female representatives of Social Service Committees. The SCCs are willing to change the system in favor of poor but will require further assistance from SAP-PK in terms of change in their rules of business through interventions at the provincial government level.

- Baseline survey of the Social Service Committees and Government Line Agencies is underway to assess the existing situation and performance related gaps. The findings will be discussed at different relevant forums.
- In 4 UC development plans, women's issues have been taken into consideration. SAP-PK sought assistance from CIDA Devolution Support Project in preparation of the UC development plans. The process of CDSP in preparing development plans is gender sensitive as it specifically takes into account the voices of women with regards to various services. Profiles of 12 districts were also completed during the reported period as initial part of the process.
- In 24 district and 4 provincial level advocacy meetings, held by SAP-PK with district as well as provincial governments, SAP-PK discussed its findings with regards to poor performance of the concerned vis-à-vis women, with the authorities. The district and the provincial government (of Pervaiz Elahi) ensured SAP-PK of its optimum support to the cause of women's development. Gender Reform Action Plan also came under discussion in these meetings. SAP-PK re-affirmed its commitment to follow-up on GRAP in its meetings at the district level and informed the provincial and district government about the priorities of the peasants and workers.
- During the reported period, SAP-PK organized 40 meetings of PGWs, GLAs and NGOs at the district level for identification of resources, pro-people service delivery and increase in the budget for women. The forthcoming assessment reports of the performance of GLAs and SSCs will actually tell whether the representatives have fulfilled their promises in comparison with the statistics of the previous years.
- SAP-PK also organized 20 district level talk shows in which GLAs gave briefing of their work and people registered their complaints.

Result 4:

Enhanced and more equitable participation of peasants and rural workers in local government decision-making and accountability (re: policies, plans & implementation) supported.

- In a national conference held at Lahore leadership of all mainstream political parties presented their stance on farmers' issues and gave commitments. SAP-PK has planned to follow-up the decisions and recommendations of the conference in the next phase.
- As the result of education and training, female members of the communities continued to participate in sessions of their union councils. In 20 union councils, this practice has been going (other than focal UCs, the practice of peoples participation in UC sessions is going on).
- 126 male and female members of PWGs learnt how to develop schemes of CCBs after 4 workshops were held in focal UCs. In 16 workshops and orientations held with members of the PWGs on the role that PWGs can play to strengthen the local government system, local governments' accountability, transparency, there were 40 % women who attended the events.
- Representatives of as many as 60 PWGs met with the local leadership of political parties and pursued them to nominate women as candidates for upcoming general elections. The political parties supported the call of the PWGs. During the reported period, SAP-PK organized 160 mass mobilization meetings at the UC level for registration of women as voters and importance of

women's voters in changing face of the country. There is no clear data on how many women actually got registered as voters after the campaigns, but their numbers are in thousands.

- Two thematic papers, Democratic Governance in Pakistan and Analyses of Local Government System in Pakistan and an annual report on local governments' performance have been rolled out during the reported period. SAP-PK disseminated these studies to possibly all the concerned stakeholders.
- SAP-PK organized and trained 2200 male and female observers on election observation from across Pakistan before general elections 2008. This was the first time ever that about 1100 women were involved by any organization in the process of election observation. SAP-PK also assisted women of the communities to get them registered as voters. More than 10 messages were also published and widely disseminated to voice for representation of farmers, including women and religious minorities, in political parties, electoral process and decision making.
- About 5000 people participated in 20 Awami Tribunals. The events gave sense of direction to people with regards to performance of the local governments, democracy, accountability, transparency and women's participation in all matters which concern citizens.
- In order to promote culture of sharing, transparency and accountability, 20 awami tribunals and 16 awami parliament were also organized in which estimated 3300 citizens, elected representatives and representatives of the local GLAs interacted, shared their views and forwarded recommendations. Similarly, 14 talk shows were also organized at district press clubs in which issues of the peasants, especially women and religious minorities, were taken up in media.

Result 5:

Experiences and issues of local government system are drawn, disseminated and (collectively) advocated for policy improvement.

- SAP-PK produced 9 researches, thematic papers, policy dossiers and annual performance reports, brought out 2 translated works on poverty and voices of peasants and workers (including women and religious minorities) in local government and printed 12 editions of the monthly newsletter "Chanan" (enlightenment) during April 2007 to March 2008.
- The communication products addressed issues related to governance, peoples' participation in governance, role of government line agencies, agricultural and policy issues, performance of citizens including CCBs and PWGs, resource allocation to development projects of the local governments and the CCBs, etc. In all these productions, women's issues have been taken up with a purpose to educate people about them and to voice for pro-poor change in policies/programs/structures of the government/line departments.
- SAP-PK produced at least fifteen case studies, both videos and written, on the best practices of PWGs under SDGP during the reported period, and have disseminated to different stakeholders. Women's role in making small models of their communities successful has been amply underlined and propagated.
- During the reported period, SAP-Pk organized 20 rallies and press conferences in focal districts on increased resource allocation, water rights, peoples' participation in governance, allocation of funds to CCBs, etc.

- SAP-PK organized 3 provincial and 1 national consultations in which representatives of local governments, NGOs and media participated. In these consultations, policy recommendations were discussed which SAP-PK and other stakeholders collected at the level of UCs, regarding increased resource allocation to UCs and CCBs, transparency, capacity development. The participants identified different opportunities and platforms to pursue the recommendations, especially with the provincial governments and national reconstruction bureau.
- SAP-PK organized 8 provincial seminars on the same issues which were taken up in provincial and national consultations for the awareness of the people and advocacy purposes. Estimated 4,000 people learnt about the problems and opportunities existing in the local government system.

Result 6:

Existing local level civil society support and cooperation mechanisms strengthened.

- Provincial Advisory Groups (PAGs) organized 6 meetings during the reported period in which SAP-PK presented advocacy, training and research priorities before the members and sought their feedback and guidance.
- Peasants' networks have been formed at provincial levels during the reported period. National network is being formed. It is an encouraging factor that other organizations, especially SPO, HRCP and Aurat Foundation, are also involved in the process. Consultations have already started with various groups, NGOs and CIDA partners to form national network of peasants and workers.
- In the trainings held under this result, gender, women's rights, human security and livelihood rights have been central and estimated 210 women received trainings from Coordinating Councils and SDGP partner organizations. Around 400 staff participated in these trainings.
- Women's representation in trainers' pool has been below the target. There are 80 individuals in the trainers' pool at the moment, of which 8 women volunteered to act as trainers. SAP-PK is trying to expand the base. However, the issue of women's mobility, security and time-space are some of the major constraints at the moment. The trainers who are working at the district level are basically required to visit PWGs and district partners quite frequently. This frequency is a handicap.
- SAP-PK strongly encouraged participation of women in linkage building meetings of partners with GLAs and district dialogues. Consequently, it is now imperative for all partners to have women on board. In 40 district level policy dialogues and 20 district level liaison meetings held during April 2007- March 2008, in which 240 representatives participated, there were 63 women. Also, there were 80 liaison and networking meetings held at the district level in which accountability of the local government, participatory planning, allocation of funds to UCs and performance of government line agencies were stressed.
- The partners organized 160 meetings of District Focal Groups (DFGs) in which 1120 female and 2081 male volunteers participated and designed methods of assisting the PWGs and district partners in training, advocacy and liaison building.

- SAP-PK organized 80 meetings at the district level in which problems and needs of the DRCs were comprehensively identified and plan was developed to enhance their role so that EDRs, PWGs, DFGs, LGs and GLAs should benefit from their services. SAP-PK is also looking into the possibilities on how to increase women's direct participation in District Resource Centers.
- During the reported period, SAP-PK assessed the capacities of 12 partners, DFGs and CBOs with respect to overall thematic thrusts of SDGP and altered its trainings accordingly. Some of the needs will be addressed next year, especially with regards to doing gender audit and developing or evaluating pro-poor budgets.

Result 7:

SAP-PK's transformation to an independent focal point institution for civic education initiated

- During the reported period, SAP-PK organized two workshops on gender vis-à-vis SDGP and SAP-PK and one workshop on report writing in which 55 male and female staff members learnt about gender integration and presentation.
- Finance team from national office assisted field offices in improving record keeping and financial management practices.
- Training needs of the staff members in the national office and provincial offices have been identified and plans to address them are underway.
- New interventions are being designed on the basis of learning from the field, needs of the partners and networks and gaps, challenges and opportunities existing in SDGP.
- SAP-PK is trying to identify more funding opportunities in response to the needs which have been identified. SAP-PK is also on the move to intensify work in some areas within SDGP. It is also trying to see funding sources for other areas falling under the thematic coverage of the organization.

4-1 Management, Organisational Changes and Staff Composition:

In the past year, SAP-PK appointed some new staff members to different posts in the provincial offices. SAP-Pk provided orientation on SDGP, GAD, and MIS to the newly appointed staff.

At national office, HRD unit has been working on developing training packages for the staff in support with capacity building unit. The HRD has plans of organizing workshops on report writing.

MIS strength in national office has been increased by adding one position to meet the increased work load in terms of updating data and record of information flow from district partners to provincial offices and to the national office. This helped a lot in timely reporting to management and donors.

Mechanisms of planning and review have been devised and made operational at three levels. In each district, partners held monthly meetings at DRCs, with local PWGs, networks and DFG members. Under this mechanism, the problems facing peasants, workers, minorities, women and other community members have been discussed at length for analysis and resolution of the issues. The outcome of these discussions then were brought to bi-monthly provincial partners meetings where suggested solutions to issues were further critically reviewed and on the basis of past experiences, future guidelines were recommended. Provincial Advisory Groups (PAGs) also provided guidance and facilitation to provincial offices and teams. A national review and planning meeting were organized on quarterly basis to review the overall performance and problems facing partners. PAGs comprises of prominent personalities from media, law, civil society, social movements and HR networks besides representatives from district focal groups. In these meetings the members reviewed the progress of SDGP, bottlenecks, hurdles, administrative and managerial flaws and their possible solution.

Four provincial review and planning meetings were also held during the reported period. These meetings involved district partners and provincial staff. In these meetings progress, gaps and challenges were comprehensively reviewed and activities were planned.

At national level, four meetings were held, in which provincial staff, data officers and DRC coordinators participated to review the progress and discuss the implementation aspects of the program.

Project management Unit (PMU) also organized meetings and provided technical assistance to project implementation teams/units. This body comprises of Unit Managers, Coordinator, Provincial Coordinators, Deputy Director and Executive Director. PMU has conducted regular meetings to plan, review, monitor the performance, analysing the budgetary aspects.

4-2 Budget Planned / Realised and Explanation of Variance:

There were no major variances between budget and actual spending. However, there were some slight shifts as compared to the budget. The reason of doing so was slow pace of activities in some areas due to the law and order situation and rampant political unrest in the country since March 2007. (Annexure-III attached for further details).

4-3 Lessons learnt, Self-Critique and Key Issues to be addressed in the Next YPO:

- During the reported period, response of the peasants and workers towards 'getting together' has been very much encouraging primarily due to the political situation in the country. This trend has been noticed in Punjab and Sindh in particular. In NWFP and Balochistan, however, the

law and order situation got further worse, which in turn affected the mobilization. In view of the interest of the peasants and workers, SAP-PK would require additional activities and expansion in some areas.

- More efforts are required to bring political parties on the issue of poverty amongst in rural poor and seek their commitments. The current political situation however does not allow the political parties to focus issues such as poverty, women's rights, livelihood etc. They are more focused on issues pertaining to judiciary and future of General Musharraf. The representatives at the local level, on the contrary, are supporting the SDGP, or PWGs more precisely.
- Elected representatives especially women are uncertain of the future of local government system. This has resulted in confusion.
- Visual illustrated training curriculum need to be developed and exercised especially for PWGs.
- Within SAP-PK more efforts required to understand issues of peasants and workers.
- Access to government line agencies is not an easy task. More concerted efforts are still required to get them involved in desired project activities.
- SAP-PK requires more intensive efforts in bringing women to key positions in CCBs, PWGs, PAGs and monitoring committees.

4 PLAN OF OPERATIONS/PLANNING THE FUTURE:

4-1 Focus and priorities of the year, including cross-cutting themes activities

- Strong linkages within PWGs, DRCs, DFGs at national, provincial and district levels, and consolidation of efforts of PWGs and DRCs
- Detailed training program packaging for elected representatives, staff and partners
- Inter provincial exposure visits of PWGs
- Technical Assistance to PWGs and monitoring of general election 2008
- Staff exposure visits at provincial levels for learning and sharing
- Staff trainings at the regional level
- More focus on agriculture based issues and farmer's rights
- Functioning of committees with GLAs
- Strong linkages of PWGs, ERs, CCBs with local government institutions and GLAs

4-2 Management

During the past year, the country wide structure of SDGP has been operational successfully to a considerable extent. There were a few exceptions, of minor adjustments in recruitment as and when necessary. SAP-PK has been trying to create opportunities for the staff to get together at various occasions and thus develop and deepen their understanding about the SDGP and its backdrop from political, social and economic context. The clarity of reporting mechanism and structures and mechanism of decision making have also been the main agendas of such meetings in bringing them to a certain degree of understanding. The absolute cohesion is though still a challenge because of the experience of the staff.

New staff teams and district partners were in the needs of orientation and training at advance level to have their enhanced understanding on SAP-PK's philosophy, SDGP purposes, methodology and approaches. Similarly district partners also needed to be fully involved and engaged in planning and review of implementation systems of SDGP. SAP-Pk has initiated this process both at provincial and national level. SAP-PK is also planning to hold a detailed training on Pro-poor Budgeting at the national level, with the staff so that expertise is further developed and used with regards to the local government's representatives.

During the reported period, SAP-PK has remained more focused on providing guidelines to the provincial teams to execute the activities in accordance with the feedback of the PAGs, existing situation and emerging realities. This approach gave more space to the provincial teams to work in an independent environment and groom leadership skills among their youth.

4-3 Conclusion: Critical Assumptions, External/Internal Risks and Open Issues

4-3-1 Challenges and Risks:

Situation in Punjab and Sindh is relatively better than the one in Balochistan and NWFP after the war on terror, the onslaught of fundamentalist forces (bombing of CD and barbers shops, threats to religious minorities, the case of Lal Mosque, etc.). This however does not mean that Punjab and Sindh had been cool and calm. The suicide attacks at public places and rallies and removal of the Chief Justice of Pakistan shook every social and political fibre here as well. Given to the rapidly changing scenario and the establishment's unwise steps, it seemed that the new government might

not work properly. As the focus of the political forces and power brokers has been on the power politics, some of the issues in and around LG systems are still unresolved. These include:

- Delay in formation and effectiveness of house committees especially UC level in some focused districts of SDGP.
- Lack of recognition and legal options to support initiatives of accountability and monitoring.
- Role of institutions like ECP, LG Commission, NRB to act as filter
- Women were under-represented at all levels of government tiers (despite the fact there has been a commitment from the government in the form of GRAP)
- Resistance from mainstream political parties (as peoples party demands dissolving the local governments as precondition to the general elections)

The irony of the fact is that no proper attention has been paid by concerned authorities like, NRB, M/O LG and RD etc., on these issues. It has been felt that without addressing these issues the efficiency and effectiveness of the LG system can not be ensured. There is a critical need to launch a campaign to provide constitutional cover to the local government system. As the new government is likely to be formed after this report, the future of the local government seems to be threatened.

4-3-2 Mitigation Strategies:

The size of the current situation is huge and of course beyond the ability of SDGP and SAP-PK to handle it for that matter. However, instead of sitting and watching the situation idly, the organization plans to advocate in favour of local governments and participation of women in politics. We are expanding the base of PWGs, increase consultations with the LG representatives and advocate increase in opportunities for the benefit of the marginalized people in budget allocations and development planning. We are enhancing the capacities of peasants' networks, local bodies' representatives and government line agencies and improve the capacities of the people to act as watchdog groups.